

environment. It may be that from within the aesthetic realm the skills of observing, investigating and questioning germinate. ... With the addition of aesthetics, cognition shifts from a mere passive comprehension to a tenacious quest.<sup>17</sup>

– Arthur Costa, educator and author

As human beings, students need art in their lives, the kind of quality art that outlives fads and transcends commercial sales pitches. As citizens in a global society, students need to understand and accept the validity of cultural preferences and values that vary from their own.

It is also important for students to find the aesthetic in their environments. The “eye” of the artist finds interest, meaning and often beauty in naturally occurring scenes and situations. Art making often is motivated by the desire to crystallize such experiences. The artistically educated student is able to apply the artist’s aesthetic perspective to daily life experiences, thereby making these experiences more interesting and enjoyable.

The best defense against unfiltered and unfettered media is not an official censor or a cable company gatekeeper who decides what can or can’t be broadcast. The best defense is, rather, an active, critical attitude on the part of viewers.<sup>18</sup>

– Brian Stonehill, Director of Media Studies,  
Pomona College (Claremont, California)

As consumers, students must be prepared to make choices that enrich their lives — whether in choosing television programming, acquiring recordings for their personal libraries, or purchasing furnishings for their living rooms — based on decisions about quality. They must also resist deceptive or misleading messages, which often are delivered in non-text artistic media. A quality arts education provides students with the understandings necessary to make informed choices, by helping them become informed responders to — i.e., critical interpreters and evaluators of — various electronic and other media.

For example, students and other members of American society watch a great deal of television, a medium which usually combines elements of theatre and the visual arts, and often incorporates elements of music and dance. Regardless of whether one believes that it would be desirable to decrease the total amount of time spent watching television or whether one believes that the quality of programming should be improved, the means of achieving either goal must include an education in the arts that helps students become informed critics of what they see and hear. Only then will consumers

be prepared to recognize and reject the tasteless and the mediocre and insist on quality.

**A quality arts education (6) helps develop the full range of students’ abilities.**

[Schools should] allow students to explore their aptitudes, interests and special talents.<sup>19</sup>

— *Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level*,  
National Association of Secondary School Principals

All students possess some talent or ability in each of the arts which should be cultivated so that it can enrich their lives. Developing students’ artistic abilities makes them happier and more self-confident; using those abilities to help them learn can make them more successful in all subjects. Howard Gardner has identified some of these talents as distinct intelligences, important to leading a successful life.<sup>20</sup> Research by Edwin Gordon and others suggests that artistic ability, if not nurtured early in life, may atrophy or even decline.<sup>21</sup> This fact accentuates the need for an early beginning to every student’s arts education and regular learning opportunities throughout the early grades.

Education in the four art forms exposes students to a broad range of media and processes which accommodate their varied learning styles, and provides students with avenues to develop a variety of personal abilities and intelligences. By providing students with opportunities to develop and display their artistic abilities, teachers empower students to create and express ideas important to all subject areas and to develop a sense of ownership and pride in their work.

**A quality arts education (7) prepares students for enjoyable recreation and leisure time.**

The real challenge to our society is not to enable everyone to make a living. We already have the wherewithal to do that. The real challenge is to help them make their lives meaningful. Fulfillment comes out of deeper things than food, clothing and shelter — clearly the arts are among those things.<sup>22</sup>

– David Carson, President and Chief  
Executive Officer, People’s Bank

Education should help students not only to make a living, but also to make life *worth* living. Because students spend a majority of their time outside school and adults spend a majority of their lives outside the workplace, they have many hours available to enjoy the arts.

Although it is never too late to learn about the arts or to participate in a particular art form, the individual who enters adulthood with a well-rounded arts education is able to use this foundation as a basis for a lifelong personal involvement in the arts, which enriches and enhances the quality of life in many different ways.

The future will belong not only to the educated man, but to the man who is educated to use his leisure wisely.<sup>23</sup>

– C. K. Brightbill

The arts provide students with important opportunities to enrich their recreation and leisure. Millions of people each year attend arts events and purchase arts products. More people attend arts events than athletic events, by a wide margin.<sup>24</sup> Students who are educated in the arts develop the capacity to understand, appreciate and enjoy art works and performances which are more profound, more complex, more diverse and, therefore, potentially more rewarding than students who lack such an education. A quality arts education motivates students to seek opportunities to respond to live and recorded art which can expand and enrich their lives. In fact, participation in arts education is the strongest predictor of future involvement in the arts.<sup>25</sup>

Several studies that consider the effect of art on the quality of experience... show that a person will report significantly higher levels of happiness, self-esteem and other positive responses when actively engaged in art or music, as compared with other activities<sup>26</sup>... In other words, the claim seems well established that aesthetic experiences stand out from the rest of life by being more positive.<sup>27</sup>

— Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Professor of Psychology,  
University of Chicago

An arts education also prepares students to participate actively in creating new art work and performing art works created by others. Many individuals play instruments or paint for their own satisfaction. There are also numerous opportunities for amateur artists to share their art work with others in forums such as community theatres, church choirs, dance clubs and craft fairs. Most students' achievement and, therefore, their ability to take pride in their art work depends largely on the growth they achieve through arts education in schools.

**A quality arts education (8) prepares students for success in a wide variety of careers.**

Arts education aids students in skills needed in the workplace: flexibility, the ability to solve problems and communicate; the ability to learn new skills, to be creative and innovative, and to strive for excellence.<sup>28</sup>

– Joseph M. Cahalan, Director of Corporate  
Communications and Public Relations, Xerox Corporation

The Education Commission on the States concluded that one-third of all children in today's classrooms will eventually work in an arts-related job at some point during their careers.<sup>29</sup> The skills and understandings conveyed by studying the arts are preparation not only for careers as artists, but for virtually every job or profession. Many arts skills are essential to success in non-arts fields. For example, the ability to prepare compelling ways of presenting ideas through visual and sound images is essential for fields such as marketing and publishing. Arts education develops students' multimedia literacy, a basic skill for economic success.

Arnold Packer, former director of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) at the U.S. Department of Labor and author of the influential report *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000*, points out that arts education develops the broad skills necessary for tomorrow's economy. The SCANS Report calls for students to develop "a three-part foundation of intellectual and personal qualities":

- **basic skills:** reading, writing, mathematics (arithmetical computation and mathematical reason), listening and speaking;
- **thinking skills:** creative thinking, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn and reason; and
- **personal qualities:** individual responsibility as well as self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity.<sup>30</sup>

Packer points out that the arts provide students with ideal opportunities to learn most of the above skills and qualities. For example, they learn to manage time and resources and to strive for high standards of excellence while completing artistic projects and preparing productions. Experienced performing artists participate well as team members, taking individual responsibility while working effectively with diversity. As students study the arts they learn how to organize, evaluate and interpret information. They become adept at making decisions concerning materials and techniques. They learn to analyze specific tasks and solve problems indi-

vidually and in groups. They cultivate their ability to think creatively, imagine possibilities and evaluate their own work.

In fact, Packer places the arts' capacity to foster divergent thinking at the very heart of improving the world of business:

Firms at the forefront of change are 're-engineering' their corporations. 'At the heart of business re-engineering lies the notion of discontinuous thinking – identifying and abandoning the outdated rules and fundamental assumptions...<sup>31</sup> 'This sounds like the definition of art, which forever changes its audiences' perceptions of reality. Re-engineering requires 'artful work.'

Employers who exert influence on their states' and communities' school boards should realize that the arts are the best places in the curriculum to learn divergent thinking. It is, therefore, in the employers' interest to have arts education strengthened in the curriculum and to assure access for all students. Employers must insist that the arts are given the same weight as physics or trigonometry. They must tell the school boards that their employees are as likely to use the skills they learn in dance, music, theatre and the visual arts as they are to call upon their knowledge of Newtonian physics or mathematics.<sup>32</sup>

Studying the arts is not just desirable, but essential, to prepare students for the 21st century workplace. It is little wonder, therefore, that colleges and universities place a premium on excellence in arts education when selecting students for admission. For example, admissions officers at Harvard, Yale and over 70 percent of the nation's other major universities have stated that high school credit and achievement in the arts are significant considerations for admission to their institutions. In fact, an increasing number of individual universities and state university systems are *requiring* high school credits in the arts for admission.<sup>33</sup>

**A quality arts education (9) provides a creative, motivating vehicle for mastering technology, including multimedia.**

[Effective schools] integrate technology into the regular curriculum rather than

teach specific courses about specific pieces of equipment.<sup>34</sup>

– *Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level*,  
National Association of Secondary School Principals

Technology is not an end in itself, but rather a tool to be used to achieve curricular goals. The most effective way to learn technology is by using it to complete educational projects in various disciplines that students find interesting. As discussed further in Chapter 3, technology plays an important role in every aspect of arts programs. Schools can and should teach students the use of technology, including computers, through arts courses.

If you ask an auditorium filled with computer science students how many of them play a musical instrument, or how many consider themselves to have a serious interest in music, most hands shoot up. The traditional kinship between mathematics and music is manifested strikingly in contemporary computer science and within the hacker community. The media lab attracts some of the best computer science students because of its music.<sup>35</sup>

– Nicholas Negroponte, Professor of Media Technology at M.I.T., in his book, *Being Digital*

Communication increasingly occurs in forms combining text, sound and/or visual images. Such forms are commonly referred to as *multimedia*. The arts are the media that distinguish multimedia from traditional text communication.

Arts courses provide a highly effective vehicle for students to master the use of technologies, including multimedia, because they ask students to use technology for the highly motivating purpose of self-expression. Hence, students who learn to use technology to create art works achieve three important goals: mastering arts content, becoming technologically literate and learning to communicate effectively.

**A quality arts education (10) develops self-discipline and focus, (11) develops the capacity to refine work, aspiring to high quality standards, (12) fosters creativity and independence and (13) develops the ability to solve complex, often ambiguous, problems.**

The arts are not so much a result of inspiration and innate talent as they are a person's capacities for creative thinking